

Code of Conduct - Noa's Place CIO

1. Welcome & Purpose

Noa's Place CIO is here to create a safe, inclusive, sensory aware community hub where everyone is welcome just as they are. This Code of Conduct sets out the expected standards of behaviour so that everyone can enjoy Noa's Place safely and respectfully.

We aim to create a space where neurodivergent and disabled individuals (and their families) can be themselves without pressure to "mask" or fit into neurotypical expectations, while protecting the safety, dignity, and comfort of everyone present.

2. Who this code applies to

This Code applies to everyone engaging with Noa's Place, including:

- **Trustees**
- **Staff**
- **Volunteers**
- **Service users, family members, supporters, and visitors**
- **External providers/contractors and partners** while on site or representing Noa's Place

Everyone is expected to follow this Code when:

- On Noa's Place premises or at Noa's Place activities/events (including off-site events); and/or
- Using Noa's Place digital tools or online spaces; and/or
- Representing Noa's Place in any capacity.

3. Core Principles

All participants in the Noa's Place community are expected to uphold the following core principles:

- **Kindness:** Every person is met with patience, warmth, and compassion.
- **Belonging:** Nobody should feel alone; everyone has a place here and is accepted exactly as they are.
- **Listening:** We value every voice; feedback and lived experience help shape how we work.
- **Calm:** We maintain sensory-considerate environments that allow people to breathe and self-regulate.

- **Growth:** We focus on small steps, personal strengths, and helping everyone flourish.

Zero tolerance: Noa's Place has zero tolerance for discrimination, bullying, or harassment.

4. Communication

We all communicate differently. Please:

- Use respectful, inclusive language.
- Be patient with different communication styles (e.g., verbal, non-verbal, AAC, echolalia, delayed processing, selective mutism, communication cards).
- Give people time to process and respond; avoid pressuring someone to make eye contact, speak, or interact.
- Ask before offering physical contact or help (unless there is an immediate safety risk).
- Keep feedback kind, clear, and specific; avoid sarcasm, insults, or "calling out" in a way that escalates.
- Respect that stimming, use of headphones, sunglasses, fidgets, or movement breaks may be necessary.
- Behaviour will always be understood in context, including sensory overload, distress, communication differences, and support needs, while prioritising the safety of all.

5. Sensory Respect

Noa's Place is sensory aware. Please help keep the space comfortable for everyone by:

- Being mindful of noise levels (voices, music, phone speakers, toys, and equipment).
- Respecting **designated quiet zones** and any "low sensory" sessions/rules in place at the time.
- Being mindful of personal space and avoiding crowding or blocking exits/doorways.
- Avoiding flash photography/bright lights unless specifically permitted by staff for a clear purpose.
- Following staff guidance on lighting, sensory equipment use, and safe play to protect people and the space.

6. Confidentiality & Privacy

We take privacy seriously. Please:

- Respect that many community members and families share sensitive personal information.

- Do not share someone else's personal story, diagnosis, contact details, or images without their **explicit** consent (and a parent/guardian's consent where applicable).
- Do not record, livestream, photograph, or film other people (especially children) without consent and staff approval.
- Keep any information learned through Noa's Place (in person or via digital tools/communications) confidential unless there is a safeguarding concern.

When using Noa's Place digital tools or online spaces:

- Do not share personal data of other members without explicit consent.
- Do not post or distribute content that is offensive, discriminatory, or harassing.
- Engage constructively and avoid the spread of misinformation.

7. Prohibited Conduct

The following behaviors are strictly prohibited and may result in immediate removal from the premises or termination of association:

- **Discrimination and Harassment:** Any form of bullying, victimization, or harassment based on protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010.
- **Violence and Aggression:** Physical violence, threats of violence, or intimidating behavior.
- **Substance Misuse:** The possession or use of illegal substances or being under the influence of alcohol while on-site or representing the charity.
- **Theft and Property Damage:** Intentional damage to the sensory hub, equipment, or the property of others.
- **Breach of Confidentiality:** Unauthorized disclosure of sensitive information regarding service users or organizational operations.

8. Safeguarding

Noa's Place CIO operates a zero-tolerance policy toward abuse. All conduct must align with the **Safeguarding Policy (Children and Adults at Risk)**. Any behavior that poses a risk to a child or a vulnerable adult will be handled immediately in accordance with statutory requirements and reported to the relevant authorities where necessary.

9. Professional Boundaries (Staff and Volunteers)

Staff and volunteers must:

- Maintain professional boundaries with service users and families.
- Not use their position to influence others for personal or financial gain.
- Disclose any potential conflicts of interest to the Board of Trustees.

10. Accountability (Breaches of this Code)

We will take concerns seriously and respond in a way that prioritises safety, fairness, and learning.

10.1 What happens if this Code is breached

Depending on what has happened, we may:

- Have a calm conversation to clarify expectations and agree next steps.
- Offer support, reasonable adjustments, and/or mediation where appropriate.
- Set clear boundaries (e.g., agreed behaviour plan, conditions of attendance, time-limited restrictions).
- Ask someone to take a break from the space (cool-down) or leave for the day.
- Suspend or restrict access to activities or services.
- End a volunteer arrangement or employment (in line with the relevant policies and procedures).
- Permanently exclude an individual where necessary to protect others.

10.2 Our approach: support and restoration where possible

Where it is safe and appropriate, we will aim for a restorative approach—helping people understand impact, repair harm, and prevent repetition. We recognise that distress, sensory overload, or communication differences can affect behaviour, and we will consider reasonable adjustments and support needs.

10.3 When we must escalate

We may escalate immediately (including asking someone to leave, contacting a trusted emergency contact, or involving the police or other agencies) where there is:

- A safeguarding concern (children or adults at risk);
- Violence, threats, intimidation, or serious harassment;
- A serious or repeated pattern of harmful behaviour; or
- A serious privacy breach (e.g., sharing images of children without consent).

11. Reporting Concerns or Breaches

If you witness or experience a breach of this Code of Conduct, please follow the procedures outlined in our **Complaints & Feedback Policy**.

- **Informal Resolution:** Where safe and appropriate, issues should be resolved through calm, direct communication or with staff support.
- **Formal Reporting:** Serious breaches should be reported in writing to the Manager or the Board of Trustees via feedback@noasplace.org.uk.

12. Acknowledgement

By entering Noa's Place, using our digital tools, volunteering/working with us, or representing the charity in any capacity, you agree to follow this Code of Conduct and help keep Noa's Place welcoming, inclusive, and safe for our Halifax and West Yorkshire community.

This Code of Conduct should be read alongside our Safeguarding, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion, Complaints & Feedback, and Data Protection policies.